In this lesson, being that it didn’t seem there was much of an opportunity to develop an activity for the last two sections we decided to get the students involved by having them “teach” the lesson. We decided to make a Prezi presentation and have the students come up to the board and read the different “bubbles” to the rest of the class. We would then ask them questions about how this new information related to what they had already been learning and the project they were working on. We hoped that this would get students more excited about learning because they would be more directly involved in the process. However, this lesson didn’t turn out exactly like we had hoped.

In our 3rd hour, we had the kids get into their groups that use for their projects hoping that they would discuss how this new information related to what they were working on but they mostly either discussed something completely different or didn’t talk at all. Another bad result was that as soon as one group was done reading what was on the board, they sat down and looked instantly bored with what was going on. At the end of the hour Mrs. Kennedy approached us and asked us how we thought we could improve it because the students looked obviously uninterested. I said that we should probably have prepared more questions in advance so that we could have made them more orientated towards eighth graders. For some reason I was under the impression that we would easily be able to recall what they had already learned and connect it to the new information. This turned out to not be the case. Also, Ryan tried to get them to connect the new information to what other civilizations practiced which was obviously above their capability level. So we decided to literally co-teach with Mrs. Kennedy for the next two hours which worked so much better. We got to see her model some questions for us for the first time so we could try to emulate her style and relate to her students in a similar fashion.

The teaching strategy we used was the New American Lecture, mostly because that’s the style we prefer and also because we really wanted to get the students involved in the lesson. When we co-taught with Mrs. Kennedy we had to do a little more classroom management because she tends to “allow” the students to get a little more off track in the conversation. Because of this we didn’t get through the whole lesson in our 4th or 5th hour. In some ways I feel like this was okay because the students were so much more interested but I still feel like they missed some valuable information. Overall though I was pretty satisfied with the lesson we taught even though we had some obstacles to overcome after the first hour.

I think I learned a lot from this lesson because I learned how to engage eighth graders more effectively. In our second lesson, I believe that it’s possible that the students were so engaged because we had activities for them to participate in. In our third lesson it was harder to keep the students engaged even though we had them coming up to the board and reading the information. It also taught me a lesson about preparing ways to be able to move around the classroom more even though the slides need to be changed on the smartboard. I would personally invest in some kind of clicker so that I could go the next slide without having to be by the board. In the 4th hour after talking to Mr. Sievek about mobility in our teaching I decided to have the students use the smart board themselves and click to the next slide. This seems like such a simple thing to change in our lesson but it had just never occurred to me previous to our conversation with Mr. Sievek. I think that because of that conversation we also had to change more things on the fly and adapt our lesson and improve it.

While I think that this lesson could have gone better and definitely didn’t measure up to how awesome our second lesson was, I feel that I learned a lot by making the “mistakes” that we did and correcting them. I think working with eighth graders is in fact a fine art like Mr. Sievek and Mrs. Kennedy stated and that this lesson allowed us to start to develop this art.